



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

February 10, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Lupe Ramos-Montigny

SUBJECT: Approval of Resolution Honoring César E. Chávez

Attached is a Resolution Honoring César E. Chávez that the State Board of Education is being asked to consider for approval at its February 11, 2014, State Board of Education meeting.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Resolution Honoring César E. Chávez, as attached to the memorandum dated February 10, 2014 from Lupe Ramos-Montigny, State Board of Education member.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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DRAFT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RESOLUTION HONORING CÉSAR ESTRADA CHÁVEZ

WHEREAS, César Estrada Chávez, was an American hero, a civil rights leader, Latino, farm worker, and a labor leader; a religious and spiritual figure; a community servant and social entrepreneur; a crusader for nonviolent social change; and an environmentalist and consumer advocate; and

WHEREAS, César, a second-generation American, was born on March 31, 1927, near his family's farm in Yuma, Arizona; and at age 10, his family became migrant farm workers after losing their farm in the Great Depression; and throughout his youth and into his adulthood, César migrated across the southwest United States laboring in the fields and vineyards, where he was exposed to the hardships and injustices of farm worker life; and

WHEREAS, César's dream was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers; and in 1962 he co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America; and

WHEREAS, for more than three decades, César led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions, as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers; and against previously insurmountable odds, he led successful strikes and boycotts that resulted in the first industry-wide labor contracts in the history of American agriculture; and

WHEREAS, His union's efforts brought about the passage of the groundbreaking 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act to protect farm workers; and today it remains the only law in the nation that protects the farm workers' right to unionize; and

WHEREAS, César, a strong believer in the principles of nonviolence practiced by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., effectively employed peaceful tactics such as fasts, boycotts, strikes, and pilgrimages; and

WHEREAS, in 1968 he fasted for 25 days to affirm his personal commitment, and that of the farm labor movement, to non-violence; and he fasted again for 25 days in 1972; and in 1988, at the age of 61, he endured a 36-day "Fast for Life" to highlight the harmful impact of pesticides on farm workers and their children; and

WHEREAS, César passed away in his sleep on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, Arizona, only miles from his birthplace of 66 years earlier; and more than 50,000 people attended his funeral services in the small town of Delano, California, the same community in which he had planted his seed for social justice only decades before; and

WHEREAS, On December 3, 2003, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed Public Act 225 of 2003 to designate March 31 of each year as César E. Chávez Day in the State of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2012, the Navy christened and launched the dry cargo/ammunition ship the USNS César Chávez in a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO Shipyard in San Diego honoring César who served the Navy during World War I; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2012, President Barack Obama established the César E. Chávez National Monument in Keene, California. The site marks the extraordinary achievements and contributions to the history of the United States made by César E. Chávez and the farm worker movement that he led with great vision and fortitude. La Paz reflects his conviction that ordinary people can do extraordinary things; and

WHEREAS, on March 28, 2014, *César Chávez: An American Hero*, an upcoming film directed by Diego Luna will be released starring Michael Peña as Chávez and John Malkovich as the owner of a large industrial grape farm who leads the opposition to Chávez's organizing efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education recognizes the life, legacy and contributions of César E. Chávez; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education recognizes that local education agencies determine curriculum, and strongly encourages the inclusion of lessons on César E. Chávez as appropriately referenced in the Grade Level Content Expectations and High School Content Expectations in the Social Studies Standards.